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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2010

Media Highlights

US Embassy Ankara - Turkey Media Reaction - February 4, as prepared
by the Public Affairs Information Office

How the US is Playing

General McChrystal: "We Take Turkish Soldiers as an Example"
(Milliyet, Radikal)
Mainstreams Hurriyet, Milliyet, Aksam, Sabah, Vatan, liberal
Radikal, and conservative-nationalist Cumhuriyet's defense
correspondents continue reporting from Afghanistan within the
framework of a press tour arranged by the TGS. The papers cover
General McChrystal's comments delivered during his visit to Turkish
Forces Headquarters. Hurriyet quotes General McChrystal as saying
"Our goal is to protect the Afghan people and to allow the country
to develop in a secure and stable atmosphere. We want to help
people. In the past, maybe our goal was same but there were
mistakes in the implementation. We might have made some mistakes.
There are so many threats against the Afghan people. We are trying
to minimize our mistakes while we are trying to help the Afghan
people. If the Turkish troops and the other coalition forces were
not here, would Afghan children be able to go to school? Would
elections take place? We should ask these questions. It is
necessary to show respect to the families, schools and the values of
the people. Now, we are aware of all these and I hope things will
be better. Not only us but, all other coalition forces learned a
lot from the Turkish forces." Vatan cites an AP International
report that "Turkish soldiers' guns are always turned downward while
they are patrolling because Turks want to give an open message to
the Afghan people: 'We didn't come here to fight.'"

Liberal Radikal Columnist Nuray Mert does not quite agree with the
current role of Turkish soldiers in Afghanistan. She thinks the
fact that Turkish soldiers have started patrolling with Afghan
forces in the streets of Kabul might be part of a big plan: "In the
new world order, upcoming wars will be taking place between radical
and moderate Islamic countries. What Turks are doing in Kabul is a
clear example of this plan implemented and we should not be
overwhelmed by flattering statements about us. The US and other
western countries are trying to put moderate Islamic forces before

radical elements to fight, thus they hope to eliminate growing anti-western sentiment."

Iran Nuclear Issue "All Eyes Turn to Turkey on Sanctions" (Milliyet)

In "Both Carrot and Stick to Iran," leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet highlights "while the US offers to help Iran purchase medical isotopes, on the other hand, it threatens with a huge package of sanctions." In a side story, Cumhuriyet notes in "Sanctions from the US," that "the US government sanctions four Iranian construction companies tied to Iranian Revolutionary Guards." Mainstream Milliyet in "All Eyes Turn to Turkey for Sanctions," expresses concern over "Turkey's attitude at the UN Security Council regarding voting as new sanctions on Iran are expected to be imposed in several weeks." Pundits continue to focus on Iran's uranium enrichment decision and comment on possible consequences. Erdal Guven of liberal Radikal and Kadri Gursel of mainstream Milliyet both agree that the enrichment will strengthen Tehran's capacity to produce atomic bombs, although each writer makes different predictions on next steps. Radikal's Erdal Guven sees hope: "Neither the US nor Iran have fully closed the negotiation door. Cards are being reshuffled for the next step of the game." Milliyet's Kadri Gursel observes that a strike against Iran is inevitable even if the UNSC approves sanctions: "In order to legitimize the game plan, UNSC sanctions should be the first step even though the Western countries are aware they are of no use. This process will end up as a strike against Iran, which means war, one way or the other because Iranian nuclear capacity has a potential to trigger nuclear race in the region."

Iran - Demonstrations

ANKARA 00000229 002 OF 003

In "Civilian Life is Under Basij Control," liberal Radikal says "as Iran marks the 31st anniversary of the Islamic revolution in a tense atmosphere, arrests of the opposition have already started upon demonstrations. Meanwhile, Iranian President Ahmadinejad brought a proposal to expand the political voice of the civilian militia corps called Basij. The Basij will be in force not only in universities but also in every ministry." NTV carries live coverage on the anniversary celebrations in Iran under the headline "Tense Celebrations in Iran."

In the Headlines

Sargsian: Turkey Should Ratify the Protocols First (Zaman)
Media outlets report Armenian President Sargsian addressed the Chatham House in London, saying the normalization protocols with Turkey would be submitted to the Armenian Parliament on Wednesday, noting however that Turkey would have to approve it first. Sargsian said he was confident that the Armenian Parliament would approve the protocols, as long as the Turkish Parliament approved it without any conditions. Sargsian recalled Turkish officials have said in the past that the result of the voting in the Turkish parliament could not be predicted, and that the parliament was politically independent. Sargsian wants to avoid a situation where Armenia approves the protocols while Turkey rejects it. Sargsian also said he would invite Azerbaijani President Aliyev to the ceremony if the Armenian-Turkish border opens, report papers.

European Parliament Approves Resolution on Turkey Progress Report
Media outlets report that the European Parliament approved by a large majority a resolution on Turkey's progress in 2009 which calls for Turkey to withdraw its troops from Cyprus and allow Greek Cypriot access to the ghost city of Varosha (Maras). The resolution expressed concern over the alleged criminal network 'Ergenekon,' and a suspected military plot to overthrow the government, popularly dubbed 'the Sledgehammer.' While observing that "the cases offer an opportunity to boost confidence in the functioning of democratic institutions and the rule of law," the resolution expressed dismay over the closure of the Democratic Society Party (DTP). The resolution called for the reform of Turkey's judicial system, which it said was "of crucial importance for the country's modernization process." It criticized the rejection by the Constitutional Court of an amendment that cleared the way for trial of military personnel at civilian courts, saying the ruling dealt a serious blow on Turkey's reform efforts. According to papers, the resolution also

called on the Turkish government to resume work on a new constitution that would strengthen human rights and basic freedoms in the country.

Meanwhile, Turkey's chief EU negotiator Egemen Bagis said yesterday it was not possible for Turkey to accept the sections regarding Cyprus in the Turkey report of European Parliament, stressing, "Turkey does not have a plan or opinion to withdraw troops from the island."

TGS Chief, Naval Commander on Accusations against Military Speaking to mainstream HaberTurk, the Chief of the military General Staff (TGS) General Ilker Basbug said "For many months various accusations against the military were mentioned. Many officers were accused of having been involved in different coup plans and scenarios, but none of them proved to be true or more detailed information came to the surface. Who will be held responsible for the production of these allegations? There is a serious damaging campaign against the military. We are running out of patience about these issues. In fact damaging the military officers and the military is not an individual issue, it is a problem for the whole country."

Meanwhile, media outlets report Naval Forces Commander Admiral Esref Ugur Yigit yesterday attended the funeral of Captain Berk Erden who committed suicide in Izmir. Reacting to various allegations about the reasons behind the Captain's suicide, Yigit said "It is not

ANKARA 00000229 003 OF 003

possible to keep silent. Various allegations were mentioned about him. Before accusing people, one shall turn to himself and ask what he would do if he was falsely accused of such an issue."

Poll: Single Party Government Unlikely after Elections (Vatan) Mainstream Vatan carries the results of a survey conducted from January 14-30 by AKAM based on interviews with 15,620 people from all provinces. If elections were held today, the distribution of votes among parties would be as follows: AK Party 30.2 percent, CHP 26.8, MHP 18.7, DP 7.3, and BDP 7.0.

According to the survey, the DP and the BDP would not be able to pass the 10 percent election threshold, so Vatan expects the BDP to use the tactic of the disbanded DTP and enter the parliament as independent lawmakers. The paper notes that the AK Party will not have the necessary majority for a vote of confidence, and the total seats to be taken by CHP and MHP will be slightly above 276, the votes needed for parliamentary approval.

Education Ministry Sees Missionary Activity as a "Threat" (Milliyet)

Mainstream Milliyet reports the Association of Protestant Churches in Turkey said in its "monitor report" for 2009 that missionary activities were characterized as a "national threat" in Turkish schoolbooks, and that the Education Ministry has declined to erase the expression from the schoolbooks despite the requests of the Protestants. Milliyet recalls that three Protestant Bible publishers were killed in the city of Malatya in 2007.

TV Spotlight (CNN Turk)

CHP leader Baykal said the responsibility for defusing tensions in Turkey fell on PM Erdogan and his party.

A group of women workers from Turkey's former state-owned alcohol and tobacco monopoly, or Tekel, visited the PM's wife Emine Erdogan, requesting her to convince the PM to find a solution to their 58 days of desperation.

Two people are arrested in connection with an attack on the Kurdish BDP office in Ankara.

Businessman Mehmet Emin Karamemmet is given 11 years and eight months prison sentence for irregularities in defunct Pamukbank.

Prime Minister Erdogan will host Thursday a luncheon for the ambassadors of EU countries.

Prime Minister Erdogan will travel on February 13 to Qatar on an official visit.

Foreign Minister Davutoglu says France never hinted that the wife of PM Erdogan was not wanted in Paris.

European leader have agreed on a plan for bailing out Greece in debt crisis.

Three Turks are convicted in Switzerland for denying Armenian genocide claims.

Israeli warplanes hit Gaza's disused Yasser Arafat airport near the border town of Rafah.

JEFFREY